



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
OFFICE OF MARINE AND AVIATION OPERATIONS
 COMMISSIONED PERSONNEL CENTER
 Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3282

MEMORANDUM FOR: Rear Admiral David A. Score, NOAA
 Director, NOAA Corps

FROM: Captain Lawrence T. Krepp, NOAA
 Director, Commissioned Personnel Center

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2015 Officer Corps Management Plan

PURPOSE

The Officer Corps Management Plan (OCMP) presents the current state of the NOAA Corps workforce and provides recommendations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 promotion zones. The OCMP analysis focuses on 18 months of accession and attrition data, Years of Service (YOS) by grade, and the needs of the Service. The OCMP serves as an execution plan based on properly managing the Corps' promotion process to ensure officers have the appropriate opportunity to gain the necessary experience to be eligible for the next grade.

OVERVIEW

Annually, CPC develops the OCMP by analyzing workforce strength, attrition trends and forecasts, promotion decisions from the prior year, and accession needs for the commissioned officer workforce. The decisions made with this memorandum enable the NOAA Corps to meet workforce needs within its legal, historical and logistical constraints.

There are three steps to the officer promotion process: eligibility, selection, and promotion. Each step is controlled by laws, regulations, and administrative procedures.

- 1) Eligibility for promotion to each grade is based on the parameters described in NOAA Corps Directive (NCD) Chapter 4, Part 3. The *critical* elements considered in determining promotion eligibility are: 1) experience and training, 2) years of service (YOS), 3) time in grade (TIG) (Table 1), and 4) completion of periodic medical examinations.
- 2) The selection process is dependent on the authorized strength, the timing to move packages from selection to promotion, and the needs of the Service. These elements are all taken into consideration when determining the zone size and opportunity of selection percentage.
- 3) Once officers have been selected for promotion, the clearance process to legally promote selectees can take from two to twelve months. The variance in timing is dependent on: the NOAA's, DOC's and White House's processes and calendars; the selection grade; or other circumstances that arise.

Captain (O-6)	Four years in the permanent grade of commander
Commander (O-5)	Four years in the permanent grade of lieutenant commander
Lieutenant Commander (O-4)	Three years in the permanent grade of lieutenant
Lieutenant (O-3)	Two years in the permanent grade of lieutenant (junior grade)
Lieutenant (junior grade) (O-2)	One year in the permanent grade of ensign

Table 1 Time in Grade (TIG) Requirements for Promotion



DEFINITIONS

Strength. The FY 2008 Omnibus Bill increased NOAA Corps’ average annual strength to 321 officers. In FY 2013, the NOAA Corps received authorization for an additional position of importance and responsibility increasing NOAA Corps Flag officer billets to four (one VADM, one RADM, and two RDMLs). For the purposes of annual average strength, Flag officers are not included. With proposed accession plans and anticipated attrition, the FY 2015 estimated average annual strength is 321, plus four Flag Officers.

Accession. Accession is the increase in strength, which mainly occurs by bringing new officers into the Service via BOTC, or through Inter-Service Transfer (IST). The FY 2015 accession plan for new officer candidates is targeted for a minimum 27 officer candidates, yielding an estimated average annual strength of 321 officers (plus four Flag Officers).

Attrition. Attrition is any retirement, or separation of a member from service. Attrition rate is calculated annually based on the number of officers that detach from the NOAA Corps and the average annual strength. Attrition creates vacancies in the respective grades and may affect the overall number of NOAA Corps promotions allowable per year. Table 2 shows the attrition rates for the previous three years. Provided that the attrition trend holds for FY15 the average annual strength should not exceed 321 officers (plus four Flag Officers).

Attrition Shown by Grade				
	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	Average
O-6	8	5	8	7
O-5	0	6	2	3
O-4	0	1	1	1
O-3	7	6	4	6
O-2	4	6	6	5
O-1	9	4	4	6
TOTAL	28	28	25	27
Overall Percent Attrition	9.02%	8.76%	7.85%	8.54%
Average Annual Strength	311	320	319	317

*Does not include officers recalled from retirement.

Table 2 Attrition Rates Overall Strength and By Grade

Control Grade Distribution by Law. 33 U.S.C. 3004 specifies the strength and distribution of NOAA Corps officers. Of the total number of authorized officers on the lineal list, the proportion (in percentage) and number of officers in permanent grade are shown in Table 3 for each grade. The authorized number of officers in each grade is therefore controlled by the overall strength of the NOAA Corps.

Grade	Established Percentage	Authorized Number of Officers
O-6	8%	26
O-5	14%	45
O-4	19%	61
O-3	23%	74
O-2	18%	58
O-1	18%	57*
Total Authorized		321

Table 3 Control Grade Distribution by Law

*Note: The number of officers in each grade is rounded to the nearest whole number. The number of ensigns is decreased by one to account for this in order to keep the total at the proper end strength count.

Vacancies. The forecasted grade vacancies are based on the average attrition rate per grade over the three prior years, the approved detachment dates of known attrition, and the promotions of officers to the next grade. The estimated annual attrition rate per grade is calculated using a three prior year average of percent attrition and of total attrition by grade (Table 4).

Percentage of Overall Attrition by Grade				
	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	Average
O-6	28.6%	17.9%	32.0%	26.17%
O-5	0.0%	21.4%	8.0%	9.80%
O-4	0.0%	3.6%	4.0%	2.53%
O-3	25%	21.4%	16.0%	20.80%
O-2	14.3%	21.4%	24.0%	19.90%
O-1	32.1%	14.3%	16.0%	20.80%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 4 Annual Percentage of Overall Attrition for Each Grade

Opportunity of Selection (OOS) and Promotion Zone Size. NOAA Corps has the ability to adjust the OOS based on Service needs, by plus or minus 10 percent of what is listed in NCD 04204. The opportunity of selection (promotion percentage) model is shown in Table 5.

To Grade	Percent Opportunity (+ or - 10%)
O-6	50% (40-60%)
O-5	70% (60-80%)
O-4	80% (70-90%)
O-3	Determined annually (typically 90%)
O-2	100% of qualified

Table 5 Opportunity of Selection Percentages by Grade

Per NCD, the number of officers in a promotion zone (the zone size) shall not be less than the number of selections planned, divided by the applicable opportunity of selection shown in the table above. For example, if four O-6 vacancies are to be filled, and 50% is the OOS, the zone size will be $4/.5=8$.

DISCUSSION

This fiscal year there are two (2) major considerations to take into account with the promotion zones and appointment selections. First is the average annual strength and second is the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act's (DOPMA) desired promotion timing for officers.

In the previous years the need for more officers has been demonstrated throughout NOAA, however, FY 2015 will be the first year since 1996 that the Corps could potentially exceed its authority for average annual strength. Although the risk is minimal, there is potential for normal attrition rate to be insufficient to prevent the Corps' from exceeding its authorized average annual strength of 321 non-flag officers. Based on the trends of the last four years there has been a slow decline in the overall attrition rate, and the accession rate has been slightly above attrition in the last three years (Figure 1). In previous years, this occurrence has not been a concern, as the average annual strength was significantly below the maximum authority. Going into FY 2015, it would be prudent to use the standard opportunities of selection in the promotion zones and perform a review of the lineal list for grades O-2 and O-3. A thorough review would help indicate why there has been a proportional decline in attrition for cohorts within these two grades.

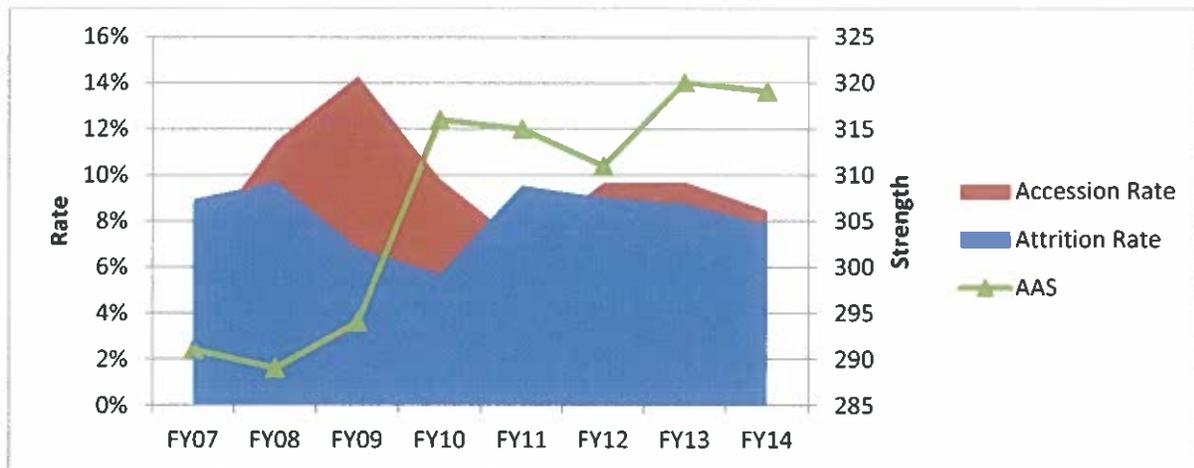


Figure 1 Attrition and Accession Data for FY 2007 through FY 2014 and Average Annual Strength (AAS)

The second consideration is the DOPMA's desired promotion timing for officers by grade which is based on YOS for those who compete for promotion to the next higher grade. Table 6 shows the recommended YOS from DOPMA compared with the NOAA Corps' average YOS within the recommended zones. In previous years the accelerated rate for promotions was evident in the O-6, O-5 and O-4 zones. The difference in NOAA Corps timing from the DoD timing was the result of the hiring freeze of the mid-1990s, the accelerated growth of the Corps since 2008 to meet the new authorized strength level, and NOAA Corps' mandatory Control Grades above O-2. The successful implementation of previous OCMR recommendations has allowed the recommended zones for FY 2015 to meet the recommended DOPMA timing when it comes to total YOS versus NOAA Corps YOS.

To Grade	DoD Promotion Opportunity	DoD Timing	NOAA Corps Timing
		Zone YOS	FY 2015 Recommended Zone YOS
O-6	50%	22 ± 1	21.6
O-5	70%	16 ± 1	15.83
O-4	80%	10 ± 1	9.30
O-3	90%	3.5/4	5.5
O-2	100 % (of Fully Qualified)	2	2.0

Table 6 Department of Defense (DoD) DOPMA Up-or-Out Promotion System for "Due Course" Officer Compared to NOAA Corps Recommended Zone Averages Based on Recommended Board Dates.

The recommended zone sizes for FY 2015 zones are tapered to meet the optimal YOS while balancing the need to fill vacancies. As the current focus is on maintaining the size of the Corps rather than increasing our strength, the promotion rates will decrease and remain consistently low until the Secretary receives the authority to increase the NOAA Corps' annual strength. Officers should expect that TIG will increase especially, in the junior grades, with the exception of O-1 who by law must be promoted by the completion of 3 YOS or be separated. For FY 2015, CPC recommends holding the selection boards in April of 2015.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this analysis, CPC recommends the following zones:

To Be Grade	Board Date (on or about)	Average YOS for Zone	Average TIG for Zone (years)	Zone Size	OOS Percentage	Select (up to)
O-6	April 2015	21.6	4.6	10	50%	5
O-5	April 2015	15.83	5.4	12	70%	9
O-4	April 2015	9.30	4.12	17	80%	14
O-3	April 2015	5.5	2.4	20	90%	18
O-2	April 2015	2.0	2.0	26	100%FQ	26

Table 6 Proposed Promotions Zones for FY 2015

These recommended zones meet the following criteria:

- Needs of the Service
- Average YOS and Time in Grade support the needs of the next grade
- Projected vacancies in the grades for FY 2014 and into FY 2015.
- At time of promotion, the average timing is within the framework for desired YOS compared to the DoD (Table 6)

DECISION

A. Number to Select/Zone Size. CPC recommends you approve the following zones and number of officers to be selected for promotion to the next higher grade. For each grade, the promotion selection Officer Personnel Board would be authorized to select “up to” the number of officers listed.

To Be Grade	Zone Size	OOS Percentage	To Select (up to)
O-6	10	50%	5
O-5	12	70%	9
O-4	17	80%	14
O-3	20	90%	18
O-2	26	100% (FQ)	26

Table 7 Opportunity of Selection (OOS) Recommendation Summary by Grade for FY 2015



 Approved _____ Date 12/4/14 Do Not Concur _____ Date

B. Board Schedule. Recommend approval of the following board schedule for announcing to the NOAA Corps.

Board Schedule	Board Date (on or about)
O-6 Selection	15 April 2015
O-5 Selection	15 April 2015
O-4 Selection	15 April 2015
O-3 Selection	15 April 2015
O-2 Selection	15 April 2015

Table 8 Board Schedule for FY 2015



 Approved _____ Date 12/4/14 Do Not Concur _____ Date

C. Delegation of Zone Sizes. Any unanticipated change in attrition (increase or decrease) between now and the Board dates will change the required number of selections. Therefore, we recommend delegating to CPC the final selection number and zone size determination that coincide with your OOS decisions.



 Approved _____ Date 12/4/14 Do Not Concur _____ Date

D. Cancellation of Annual Review for all Grades except O-2 and O-3. Recommend that CPC convene an O-2 and O-3 Review Board.



 Approved _____ Date 12/4/14 Do Not Concur _____ Date

E. Eligibility for promotion consideration. In accordance with NCD 04203B, when the needs of the NOAA Corps require, the Director may adjust length of time-in-grade requirements, to the extent that time-in-grade requirements are not otherwise fixed by statute. CPC recommends that you approve implementation of this section of the NOAA Corps Directives for the April 2015 Selection Boards, approving waivers of no more than six months of time-in-grade, as needed.


Approved _____ Date _____

Do Not Concur _____ Date _____